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**Title:** Early Days

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## Early Days

These slides are for a history presentation about the foundation of the Laboratory that is being hosted by the Bradbury Science Museum on April 17th, 2023. The event will be open to the public.



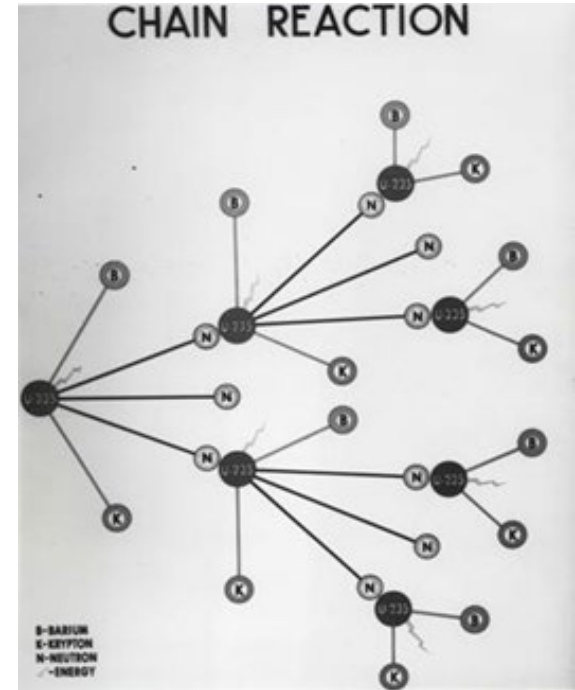
# Early Days

## The Foundation of the Laboratory at Los Alamos



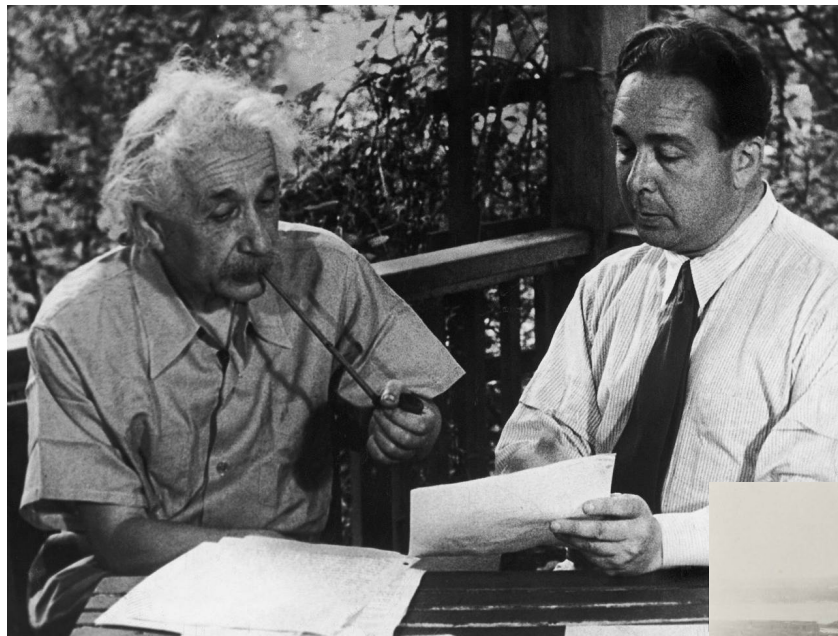
Madeline Whitacre

# Discovery of Fission



Fission is discovered in Nazi Germany in 1939

# Early US Research

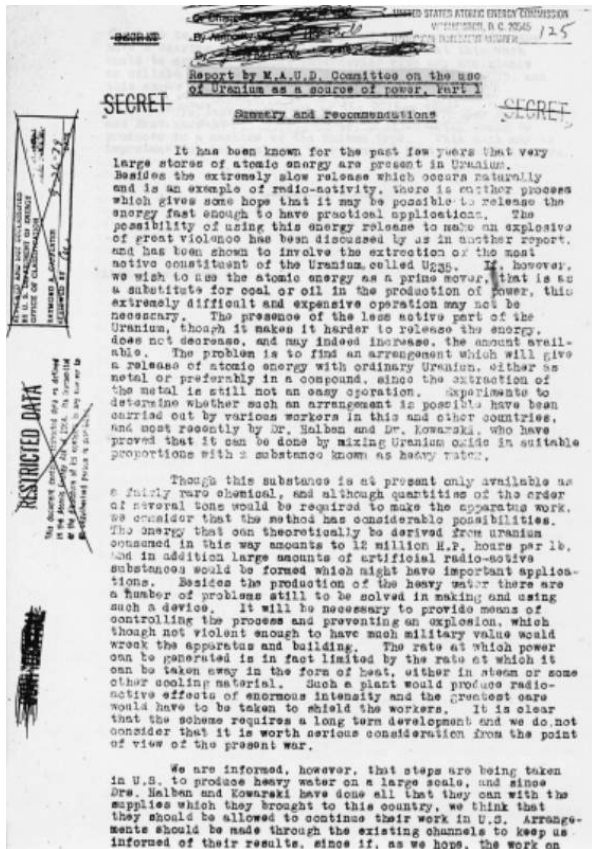


- August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939 Einstein-Szilard Letter
- Oct 21<sup>st</sup> the Advisory Committee on Uranium first meets



Halifax, December 1917

# The US Commits to Atomic Weapons Development



Vannevar Bush  
OSRD Director

- April 1940 MAUD Committee established
- July 1940 Final MAUD Report
- October 9<sup>th</sup> 1941 Bush presents the report to Roosevelt
- December 7<sup>th</sup> Attack on Pearl Harbor
- January 19<sup>th</sup> Roosevelt officially approves production of an Atomic Weapon

# Army Involvement

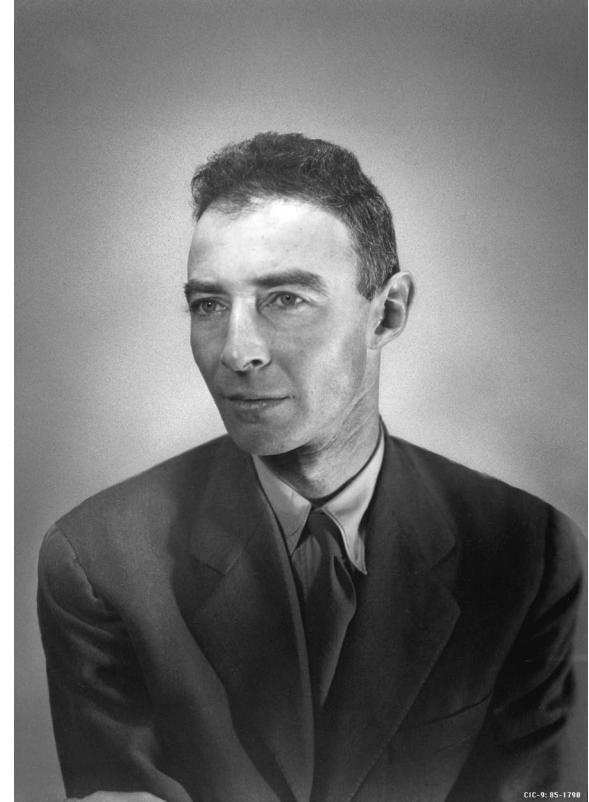


General Leslie Groves  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
Manhattan Project Director

- August 1942 Manhattan Engineer District created
- September 17<sup>th</sup> Groves assigned to head the project
- September 19<sup>th</sup> granted AAA priority

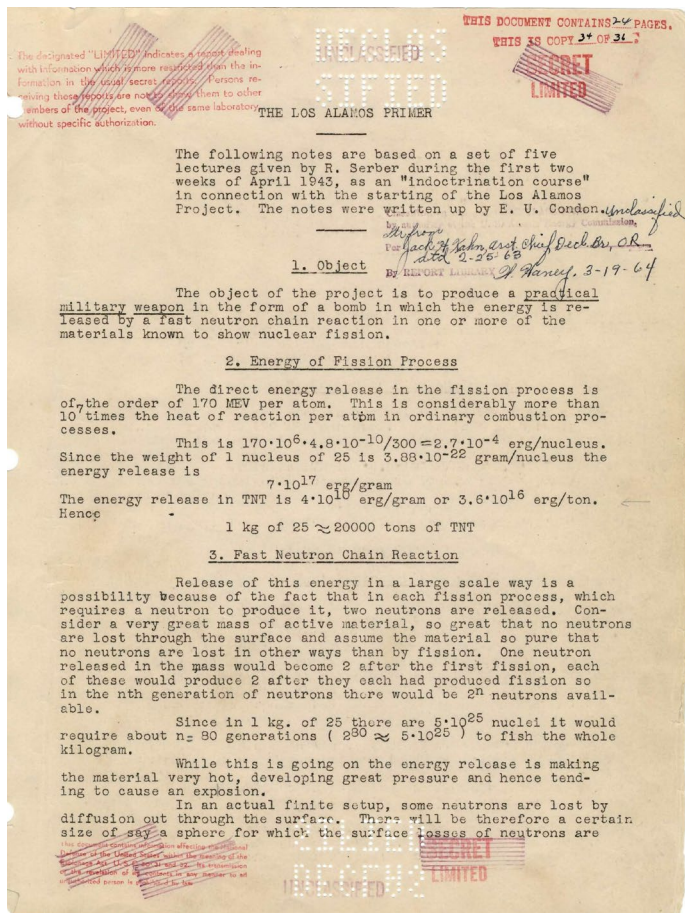


Los Alamos Boys Ranch School Graduation



J Robert Oppenheimer  
Project Y Director

# April 1943: Primer Lectures



- First two weeks of April, 1943
- Summary of the current nuclear physics knowledge base
- Practical military weapon
- Attendees included
  - Robert Oppenheimer, John Manley, Seth Neddermeyer, Edward Teller, Emilio Segre

# April 1943: UC Contract



LOS ALAMOS PROJECT MAIN GATE

27

VERIFIED UNCLASSIFIED  
*Jo. Man. OS-6 5/21/92*

~~OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

Contract No. W-7405 eng-36

THIS CONTRACT entered into this 20th day of April, 1943, effective as of the 1st day of January, 1943, by THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, (hereinafter called the "Government"), represented by the Contracting Officer executing this contract, and THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, a California Corporation, (hereinafter called the "Contractor");

WITNESSETH THAT:

WHEREAS, the Government believes that the performance of certain work, hereinafter described, is necessary in facilitating the prosecution of the War; and

WHEREAS, the prompt and successful performance of certain contracts entered into by the Government requires the furnishing of certain supplies, materials, equipment and personnel; and

WHEREAS, the accomplishment of such work by the Contractor under a cost contract, entered into after negotiations approved by the Secretary of War, and without advertising for proposals, is authorized by law and will facilitate the prosecution of the War; and

WHEREAS, as a result of such negotiation, the Secretary of War has directed the Government to enter into such a contract with the Contractor for the accomplishment of the work hereinafter described;

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto do mutually agree as follows:

~~OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

Classification changed to  
by authority of Atomic Energy Commission  
2-LB-24, 12 SEP 13 1954  
For Government changing classification in conformity with AECB  
7-1 Mc Carthy 11/16/54  
-1- making the changes, and (see)  
~~OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~ 36

- Signed April 20, 1943
- Retroactive to January 1

# April 1943: Planning Conferences



LOS ALAMOS PROJECT MAIN GATE

A-84-019  
11-12

UNCLASSIFIED

April 26, 1943

337  
S. J. Allen  
C. J. Allen

Memorandum To: Participants of Conference  
From: Dr. Teller  
Subject: Program of Conference

2nd  
3 files

A number of discussions have been planned for this week. You find enclosed a list of the discussions, the date and place of the meetings, and the name of the person who is to act as chairman.

It is desirable to keep the meetings on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday small, and everybody is urged to go to those meetings only in which he expects to make some active contribution.

The meetings on Wednesday and Friday will be general meetings.

Chairmen are asked to report in writing on the results of the meeting in their charge.

VERIFIED UNCLASSIFIED  
PUBLICLY RELEASABLE  
LANL Classification Group  
2/28/2001 12/1/98

OCT 27 1980

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
PER DOC REVIEW JAN. 1973

SECRET

UNCLASSIFIED

FINAL DETERMINATION  
UNCLASSIFIED  
L. M. Redman  
OCT 27 1980

This document contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Act, U.S.C. 80-4 and 32. Its transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

- April 15 – May 6, 1945
- Held to analyze “the scientific problems of the Los Alamos Laboratory and to define its schedules and its detailed experimental program.”

# April 1943: Planning Conferences



UNCLASSIFIED

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

~~SECRET~~

Tuesday, April 27	
9:30 A. M.	<u>Special Techniques and Equipment</u> McMillan, Chairman; Office 0-37
2:00 P. M.	<u>Fission Spectrum</u> Bloch, Chairman; Office 0-35
2:00 P. M.	<u>Integral Experiments</u> Bethe, Chairman; Conference Room
2:00 P. M.	<u>Chemistry</u> Kennedy, Chairman; Office 0-37
Wednesday, April 28	
9:30 A. M.	<u>Problems of Ordnance</u> Tolman, Chairman; Conference Room
2:00 P. M.	<u>Organization of Ordnance Development</u> Oppenheimer, Chairman; Conference Room
Following:	<u>Design of Gadget</u> McMillan, Chairman
Thursday, April 29	
9:30 A. M.	<u>Differential Experiments</u> Williams, Chairman; Conference Room
2:00 P. M.	<u>Fission Cross-section of <math>^{235}\text{U}</math> Between</u> <u>Room Temperature and 200 Kw.</u> Fermi, Chairman; Conference Room
Following:	<u>Experiments on Delayed Neutrons</u> Wilson, Chairman
2:00 P. M.	<u>Natural Sources</u> Segre, Chairman; Office 0-37
Friday, April 30	
9:30 A. M.	<u>Thermo Nuclear Reactions</u> Teller, Chairman; Conference Room
2:00 P. M.	<u>Assignment of Experiments</u> Fermi, Chairman; Conference Room
Saturday, May 1	
9:30 A. M.	<u>Discussions on Van de Graaf</u> Williams, Chairman; Conference Room
9:30 A. M.	<u>Discussion on Cyclotron</u> Wilson, Chairman; Seminar Room
2:00 P. M.	<u>Chain Reactions in Small Amounts of</u> <u><math>^{235}\text{U}</math> and <math>^{239}\text{Pu}</math> (Water Boiler)</u> Christy, Chairman; Conference Room

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OK 4/29/43  
PER DOG REVIEW JAN. 1971

- Attendees included
  - Robert Bacher, Kenneth Bainbridge, Hans Bethe, Felix Bloch, Owen Chamberlain, Robert Christy, Edward Condon, Enrico Fermi, Richard Feynman, Stanley Frankel, Al Graves, Joseph Kennedy, John Manley, Joseph McKibben, Edwin McMillan, Seth Neddermeyer, Eldred Nelson, Robert Oppenheimer, I. I. Rabi, Emilio Segre, Robert Serber, Cyril Smith, Hans Staub, Edward Teller, Richard Tolman, Arthur Wahl, Victor Weisskopf, John Williams, and Robert Wilson.

LOS ALAMOS  
PROJECT  
MAIN GATE



A-1

